

## Chapter 1. Tom and His Friends

'Tom! Tom! Where are you?'

No answer.

'Where is that boy? When I find him, I'm going to ...'

Aunt Polly looked under the bed. Then she opened the door and looked out into the garden.

'Tom!'

She heard something behind her. A small boy ran past, but Aunt Polly put out her hand and stopped him.

'Ah, there you are! And what's that in your pocket?'

'Nothing, Aunt Polly.'

Nothing! It's an apple! I can see it. Now listen, Tom.

Those apples are not for you, and I—'

'Oh, Aunt Polly! Quick-look behind you!'

So Aunt Polly looked, and Tom was out of the house in a second. She laughed quietly.

'I never learn. I love that Tom, my dead sister's child, but he isn't an easy boy for an old lady. Well, it's Saturday tomorrow and there's no school, but it isn't going to be a holiday for Tom. Oh no! He's going to *work* tomorrow!'

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Saturday was a beautiful day. It was summer and the sun was hot and there were flowers in all the gardens. It was a day for everybody to be happy.

Tom came out of his house with a brush and a big pot of white paint in his hand. He looked at the fence; it was three metres high and thirty metres long. He put his brush in the paint and painted some of the fence. He did it again. Then he stopped and looked at the fence, put down his brush and sat down. There were hours of work in front of him and he was the unhappiest boy in the village.

After ten minutes Tom had an idea, a wonderful idea. He took up the brush again and began work. He saw his friend Joe Harper in the street, but he didn't look at him. Joe had an apple in his hand. He came up to Tom and looked at the fence.

'I *am* sorry, Tom.'

Tom said nothing.

The paint brush moved up and down.

'Working for your aunt?' said Joe. 'I'm going down to the river. I'm sorry you can't come with me.'

Tom put down his brush. 'You call this work?' he said.

'Painting a fence?' said Joe. 'Of course it's work!'

'Perhaps it is and perhaps it isn't. But I like it,' said Tom. 'I can go to the river any day. I can't paint a fence very often.'

Joe watched Tom for about five minutes; Tom painted very slowly and carefully. He often stopped, moved back from the fence and looked at his work with a smile. Joe began to get very interested, and said:

'Tom, can I paint a little?'

Tom thought for a second. 'I'm sorry, Joe. You see, my aunt wants me to do it because I'm good at painting. My brother Sid wanted to paint, too, but she said no.' 'Oh, please, Tom, just a little. I'm good at painting, too. Hey, do you want some of my apple?'

'No, Joe, I can't—'

'OK, you can have *all* my apple!'

Tom gave Joe the brush. He did not smile, but for the first time that day he was a very happy boy. He sat down and ate Joe's apple.

More friends came to laugh at Tom, but soon they all wanted to paint, too. By the afternoon Tom had three balls, an old knife, a cat with one eye, an old blue bottle, and a lot of other exciting things. He was the richest boy in St Petersburg, and the fence - all thirty metres of it - was a beautiful white. He went back to the house.

'Aunt Polly! Can I go and play now?'

Aunt Polly came out of the house to look. When she saw the beautiful white fence, she was very pleased. She took Tom into the house and gave him an apple.

'Well, you can go and play. But don't come home late.'

Tom quickly took a second apple and ran off.

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On Monday morning Tom didn't want to go to school, but Aunt Polly got him out of bed, and then out of the house. In the street near the school he met his friend Huckleberry Finn. Huck had no mother, and his father drank whiskey all the time, so Huck lived in the streets. He didn't go to school, he was always dirty, and he never had a new shirt. But he was happy. The mothers of St Petersburg didn't like Huck, but Tom and his friends did.

'Hello, Huck!' said Tom. 'What have you got there?'

'A dead cat.'

'What're you going to do with it?' asked Tom.

'I'm going to take it to the graveyard tonight,' Huck said. 'At midnight. A dead cat can call ghosts out of their graves.'

'I never heard that,' said Tom. 'Is it true?'

'Well, I don't know,' said Huck. 'Old Mrs Hopkins told me. Come with me, and see. Or are you afraid of ghosts?'

'Of course not!' said Tom. 'Come and meow for me at my window at eleven o'clock.'

After this, Tom was late for school, and the teacher looked at him angrily.

'Thomas Sawyer, why are you late again?' he said.

Tom began to speak, and then stopped. There was a new girl in the schoolroom - a beautiful girl with blue eyes and long yellow hair. Tom looked and looked.

Oh, how beautiful she was! And in two seconds Tom was in love! He must sit next to her. But how?

In the girls' half of the room there was only one empty chair, and it was next to the new girl. Tom thought quickly, and then looked at the teacher.

'I stopped to talk with Huckleberry Finn!' he said.

The teacher was very, very angry. Boys were often late for school. That was bad, but talking with Huckleberry Finn was worse, much worse! The teacher took his stick, and two minutes later Tom's trousers were very hot and the teacher's arm was very tired.

'Now, Tom Sawyer, you go and sit with the girls!'

Some of the children laughed. Tom walked to the chair next to the new girl, sat down and opened his book. The other children began to work again.

After ten minutes, the girl looked up. There was an apple on the table in front of her. She put it back on Tom's half of the table. A minute later the apple was in front of her again. Now it stayed. Next, Tom drew a picture of a house and put it in front of her.

'That's nice,' the girl said. 'Now draw a man.'

Tom drew a man next to the house. The man was taller than the house, and he had very big hands and very long legs. But the girl liked him.

'Can you draw me now?' she asked.

Tom drew a girl next to the man.

'You draw beautifully. I can't draw pictures.'

'I can teach you,' said Tom. 'After school'

'Oh, please!'

'What's your name?' Tom asked.

'Becky. Becky Thatcher.'

Just then Tom felt a hand on his head. It was the teacher. He took Tom by the ear and moved him back to his chair in the boys' half of the room.

## **ACTIVITIES**

**Read Chapter 1. Are these sentences true (T) or false (F).**

**Rewrite the false ones with the correct information.**

1. Tom lived with his mother and father.
2. Tom painted all the fence.
3. Huck Finn went to school.
4. Huck wanted to go and see ghosts.
5. Tom wanted to sit with the girls.
6. Becky Thatcher didn't like Tom's pictures.